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ABSTRACT

A method of teaching public speaking adapted from the Toastmasters International program is presented for use in foreign language classes. Instructions need only to be translated into the target language and presented to students for immediate classroom use. The instructions address the structure of the speech class, writing and delivering the speech, evaluating a classmate's speech, and making the first speech. A companion activity for the first speech simulates a business reception in which students create their dream businessperson. The object is to stay in character, make small talk, make contacts, and remember details about as many other participants as possible. A career development component for the foreign language class is seen as equally important. The steps used in the career development component are drawn from those commonly recommended in career counseling literature. Students are advised to choose a direction, brainstorm on careers in a variety of areas, sift out inappropriate careers, choose a potential career for a semester-long focus, conduct an information interview, deliver a speech on the chosen career, research potential employers, prepare and perform mock job interviews, and deliver a final speech. A companion activity is a business trip to a local multi-national firm. (MSE)

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PUBLIC SPEAKING AND INTERNATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT
IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE BUSINESS COURSE

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The need to teach public speaking skills and international career development can hardly be overlooked today. Businesspersons need strong communication skills to gather information, describe, explain, sell, and manage in countless commercial and corporate scenarios. A businessperson must also feel comfortable with visibility and formality, professional attire, formal gatherings, and professional conferences. The foreign language student's need for public speaking skills is just as compelling. Public speaking skills enhance verbal skills in a course that might otherwise tend to focus on reading and writing.

How can we ignore the foreign language student's need for assistance in international career development? It is simple enough to ascertain this need. Ask any student who speaks dreamily of an international career precisely what that career might be, and most students will have no answer. At best they imagine themselves as employees in as yet unnamed "international corporations." These students clearly want for guidance, and it seems appropriate for the foreign language business course to serve as a forum for the undertaking. Most Career Planning Offices do not have the expertise or numbers to handle this specific area, and without help it proves a vast and difficult field to master. The addition of an international career development component to the foreign language for business course is also compatible with our departmental goals. First, the component is implied in the title of such a course, and, second, we have defended the need for foreign language education for a decade by arguing that students will be better prepared for the international marketplace.

The simultaneous teaching of public speaking and international career development yields a generous fringe benefit. The two dovetail beautifully and increase student motivation enormously. The nature of the business world and career development lend themselves to public speaking, and the combination reinforce the message that students must extend their vision, reach beyond the classroom to prepare for the international marketplace. In the following paragraphs, I will outline units and classroom presentations on public speaking skills international career development, and also emphasize their interrelatedness. Before doing so, however, I would like to share some of the vital statistics of a typical Business

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German class at Susquehanna University so that readers may understand the classroom context of the methodology described.

The Business German course at Susquehanna University is offered every second year and usually numbers ten to twelve students, including freshman, sophmores, juniors, and seniors. Their linguistic experience diverges greatly since some have completed semesters or years abroad. The entire class is conducted in the target language, and the Public Speaking Component is spread throughout the semester. We teach spontaneous as well as prepared speaking in weekly classes devoted to public speaking skills. The Career Development Component begins at the mid-semester and lasts for seven weeks. Career Development is incorporated into the curriculum through conventional communication activities, library research, and speeches.

The distinction between oral reports and public speaking is worth mentioning here because they are certainly not the same. It is true that many foreign language classes include oral reports in their design, but oral reports are not speeches. Oral reports tend to focus on content, rather than on method of presentation. The presentation of oral reports tends to go poorly, and, as has been observed many times, few actually gain from the experience beyond the presenter. This phenomenon can be explained according to some basic rules of communication. The content of the oral report tends to demand writing, which forces the student to read or memorize. Further, the content tends to exceed the lingusitic ability of students. But most importantly, the quantity of the content almost always exceeds what can be communicated effectively. Effective public speaking skills require more time for communication than an equal content read silently or aloud. We simply cannot listen and understand as much as we can read and understand.

Perhaps this also explains why scholars tend to read rather than to speak. Their style is not merely convention inherited from the European Humanistic tradition. The scholarly audience has accustomed itself to a wholesome dose of researched material, the result of months or years of work. But the fruits of such a duration cannot be communicated with effective public speaking skills in the twenty minutes that have become conventional in scholarly conferences. The scholar who wishes to deliver the density of material expected in an effective manner has little choice but to read a consisely written paper, even if enlivened with pauses, rhetorical questions, eye contact, wit, grace, etc.

Isn't it possible that a variation of our problem in presenting research in twenty minutes, faces students giving oral reports; and aren't their problems compounded by the fact that

public speaking skills are rarely taught in foreign language classes? Such skills are usually limited to communications classes, unfortunate because foreign language classes are generally smaller and offer more opportunity for practice. Shouldn't stylish communication be the business of the foreign language department? Public speaking skills are simple enough to teach and students enjoy it.

Arriving at a method of teaching these skills could consume more time than most foreign language teachers can spare, and the numerous books available on this topic could fill an entire semester. I hope to spare my colleagues time by presenting a system adapted from the Toastmasters International, an organization that promotes public speaking skills around the world. Their approach is straightforward and simple, and though one could delve deeper into each aspect of a speech, this method more than suffices to launch students into respectable, effective business speeches.

Before students give each speech, usually one week in advance, they receive complete instructions for preparing and delivering the speech. The instructions listed below appear as students see them on the overhead projector. Naturally, students should read and hear instructions in the target language, but I present them here in English to facilitate use in other foreign languages. In other words, the instructions below need only be translated into the target language onto an overhead projector, and could then be ready for classroom use. It helps to begin by establishing groundrules for speech classes, as follows.

The STRUCTURE of a speech class.

1. Class begins with table topics: one student calls on others at random to respond to questions on a topic of general interest, i.e. the weather, vacations, a current event. Responses are limited to 90 seconds. This training in spontaneous speaking greatly enhances poise and confidence.
2. Three to four students give 5 minute speeches.
3. After each speech, another student evaluates the speech in front of the class. The evaluator is also limited to 90 seconds, again, in order to give practice in spontaneous speaking.
4. Class concludes with a vote for the best table topic speaker and the best speech. Essential for success; greatly enhances motivation of speakers and attention of listeners.

PREPARING the students to speak.

WRITING YOUR SPEECH

1. Choose a topic that can be presented in 5 minutes.
2. Introduce your topic with an interesting or surprising notion. Why should this audience take an interest in this topic. Be sure to tell your audience what they will learn from your speech.
3. Construct a logical flow of information. Lead your audience through your speech by telling them exactly where you are headed, then follow a clear and simple path. You might number your points, or rely on chronological or sequential order. Choose a vivid, concrete example for each point that you make.
4. Conclude your speech. Summarize what you have said. Make sure that your conclusion sounds conclusive.

DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH

1. Should you be nervous? Yes, it is natural and will add zest to your speech, and, no, if you practice orally, you should have few problems.
2. Remember the goal of your speech: To communicate and to make a lasting impression, to help your audience remember your message. Therefore...
3. Dress for the occasion. Wear business attire since we are preparing to address a business audience.
4. Keep your body still and quiet. Shifting, leaning, swinging, etc. distracts your audience.
5. Rest your hands on the table or podium, if they shake, or if you don't know what to do with your hands. When appropriate, use your hands for gestures to emphasize a point or to enhance a rhetorical question.
6. Maintain eye contact randomly with your audience throughout your speech. Use your eyes and facial expressions to maintain contact with your audience.
7. Speak loudly, slowly, naturally, and with conviction. Believe what you say; don't say anything that you don't believe.
8. Plan your pauses, rhetorical questions, and gestures.

PREPARING STUDENTS TO EVALUATE A SPEECH

1. How do you evaluate a classmate's speech?
 - a. Gently. We all benefit from criticism, but, after all, we're only human.
 - b. Positively. Begin by recognizing what your classmate did well. What was particularly successful and clever? Then proceed to points on which your classmate could improve a speech the next time.
 - c. Thoughtfully. Consider the points that we have focused on. Is the content appropriate for a five minute speech? Is the speech well constructed? Is the introduction interesting? Is the body of the speech logical? Is the conclusion conclusive? Was the speech delivered with proper body posture, eye contact, and vocality?

THE FIRST SPEECHES

(THESE PRECEDE THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT)

1. Introduce yourself! This is a standard first speech for Toastmaster's International and in communications courses. It is, of course, entirely appropriate for a business person.
2. Sell us something! This is the standard persuasive speech modified to meet the needs of every businessperson.
3. How does it work? This gives students a chance to use visual aids and to explain a mechanism such as a toaster, hairdryer, home computer, etc. We review vocabulary specific to such description in class.

Companion activity to the first speech:

The Business Reception.

After formally introducing themselves to the class, students attended a class business reception. They are each assigned to create their dream business person, from career, to family, to hobbies; and then to play that character during the recep-

tion. The object of the exercise is to stay in character, to make small talk, to make contacts, and to remember details about as many other business persons as possible.

The rationale for teaching international career development is just as compelling as that for teaching public speaking. As any career development counselor can tell us, a job search requires a good bit of time, often a full year. It also requires great familiarity with an enormous market, many contacts, and relentless networking. For the average undergraduate, we can increase this time exponentially when students encounter the international job marketplace. Given its enormity, one is justified in questioning the value of such an undertaking if it is to comprise just one part of a course design. Let us agree from the outset that we must establish realistic goals. Certainly, it would be unrealistic to expect that students might find jobs during the semester. A job search requires forty hours a week, and our students have only a fraction of that time to devote. But we can walk them through the process so that it is familiar to them when the time comes to do it on their own. We can also encourage students to focus on specific jobs in specific industries, which again, as any career counselor will tell us, is a first and essential prerequisite to a successful job search.

The steps involved in my career development component are drawn from those commonly recommended in career counseling literature. The aim is to take students through the steps: to choose what they want to do, then to discern where they might fit into the international job market. Again, what is presented here has been adapted to a course and is not intended to delineate an exhaustive job search. This presentation is intended to expediate the efforts of fellow teachers. Yet, we are fortunate that a great deal of literature has recently been published on this subject, and I would like to share this wealth of information and resources. Two articles in particular will bring one close to the frontiers of research in the field. In his exhaustive article, "Overseas Employment: How to Develop Your Own International Employment Service," Frank Klein provides an "International Employment Service Resource Library" that includes sections on U.S. practical training resources, and resources for short-term and long-term overseas opportunities. His invaluable "library," which includes the titles of organizations and all manner of printed matter (like books on overseas employment with extensive bibliographies of their own), cannot help but capture the imagination. Patricia Rutledge offers another listing of resources in her article, "Foreign Languages: A Passport To Your Career," that includes additional associations, employers, and schools. A wonderful way to stay on top of the literature in international career development is to make contact with career counselors. Let them know of your concerns and they will keep you in mind as they peruse their literature.

The following are the steps that we follow in our business course, beginning at the mid-semester. Again, I present this in English.

TEACHING INTERNATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT
IN THE FL BUSINESS COURSE

1. Choose a DIRECTION for yourself. Students work together in pairs in an interviewed styled language activity. After listening to each other they describe each other's aspirations.

- a. What do I like to do?
- b. What am I good at?
- c. What will make my work meaningful?

2. BRAINSTORM on careers in the following areas:

Manufacturing
Marketing and Advertising
Travel
Transportation
Agriculture
Geology
Health Care
Government
Environment
Mass Media
Entertainment
Public Service

This activity usually graduates from a short presentation by myself, to pairs, to group presentation.

3. SIFT OUT careers from this list for international potential.

Lends itself to large group discussion.

4. CHOOSE a potentially international career for yourself for semester-long focus.

Clearly individual work for class presentation or essay. Lends itself to group brainstorming on planning activities, clubs, summer employment, etc. to direct students toward those fields.

5. CONDUCT an information interview.

Clearly an out-of-class assignment to write up, but lends itself to class discussion.

6. DELIVER a speech on your "chosen" career. "Why I chose to become a _____."

7. CONDUCT library research on potential employers.

I usually schedule two class sessions to spend in the library with students. Units begin with presentation by reference librarian. Students must research three potential employers.

8. PREPARE and PERFORM mock job interviews.

Students work in pairs and are matched for interest to the extent possible. Each has a separate preparation, either as candidate or employer. The two perform the unrehearsed job interview before the class which then evaluates both performances.

9. DELIVER final speech: ten minutes.

"Hello. My name is _____, and I represent
(name of company or organization).

Companion activity to Career Development Component:

A business trip to a local (if possible) multi-national firm.

There is a surprising fringe benefit to teaching public speaking skills on a topic as gripping as international careers, namely, that public speaking skills transcend linguistic skills to a large degree. Students who deliver clear, well-organized speeches are more successful than those who do not, regardless of linguistic ability. The distinction between the strong and weak speakers springs from the style of delivery, rather than years of study or study abroad. This surprises students. Those with little linguistic ability are pleased to learn that they can compete with upperclassmen. Seniors returning from a year abroad realize that they cannot rest on their laurels. The addition of these skills only complements advanced language training, and it is hoped that the combination will yield students whom we can place without reservation in the international workforce.

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